In the claims:

Please cancel claims 1-17, 19-26, and 28-35 without prejudice.

Claims 1 -36 canceled

Please add the following new claims:

37 (new).   A quality of service (QoS) provisioning method for a data communication switch having a plurality of ports, comprising:

receiving a packet on a first port of the switch;

mapping information from the packet to a priority descriptor;

selecting an internal priority value and an outbound priority value using the priority descriptor, wherein the internal priority value and the outbound priority value are different;

prioritizing the packet while on the switch using the internal priority value;

appending the packet with the outbound priority value; and

transmitting the appended packet on a second port of the switch.

38 (new).   The method of claim 37, wherein the internal priority value is used to select a forwarding queue on the switch for the packet.

39 (new).   The method of claim 37, wherein the outbound priority value is appended to the packet in an 802.1Q tag field.

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40 (new).   The method of claim 37, wherein the internal priority value has a smaller bit count than the priority descriptor.

41 (new).   The method of claim 37, wherein the outbound priority value has a smaller bit count than the priority descriptor.

42 (new).   The method of claim 41, wherein the priority descriptor is a six-bit value and the outbound priority value is a three-bit value.

43 (new).   The method of claim 37, wherein the information from the packet is selected from one or more Layer 2 or Layer 3 fields.

44 (new).   The method of claim 43, wherein at least one of the Layer 2 or Layer 3 fields is not dedicated to defining QoS.

45 (new).   A quality of service (QoS) provisioning method for a data communication switch having a plurality of ports, comprising:

receiving a packet having a plurality of inbound priority values on a first port of the switch;

determining an internal priority value and an outbound priority value using a selected one of the inbound priority values, wherein the internal priority value and the outbound priority value are different;

prioritizing the packet while on the switch using the internal priority value;

appending the packet with the outbound priority value; and

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transmitting the appended packet on a second port of the switch.

46 (new). The method of claim 45, wherein the internal priority value is used to select a forwarding queue on the switch for the packet.

47 (new). The method of claim 45, wherein the outbound priority value is appended to the packet in an 802.1Q tag field.

48 (new). A quality of service (QoS) provisioning method for a data communication switch having a plurality of ports, comprising:

receiving a packet having an inbound priority value on a first port of the switch;

mapping information from the packet to a priority descriptor;

determining a first prioritization for the packet while on the switch using the inbound priority value and the priority descriptor; and

determining a second prioritization for the packet as transmitted from the switch using at least the priority descriptor.

49 (new). The method of claim 48, wherein the step of determining the first prioritization includes determining a forwarding queue on the switch for the packet.

50 (new). The method of claim 48, wherein step of determining the second prioritization includes determining an outbound priority value for appending to the packet as transmitted from the switch.

51 (new).   The method of claim 50, wherein the outbound priority value is appended to the packet in an 802.1Q tag field.

52 (new).   The method of claim 48, wherein the step of determining the second prioritization includes using the inbound priority value.

53 (new).   The method of claim 48, wherein the information from the packet is selected from one or more Layer 2 or Layer 3 fields.

54 (new).   The method of claim 53, wherein at least one of the Layer 2 or Layer 3 fields is not dedicated to defining QoS.

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